

WELCOME VISITORS

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Ralph C. Link, Pastor

Trinity Church, New Bloomfield 10:30 A.M.

August 23, 1970

Service of Worship

Prelude  
\*Hymn # 11  
\*Solemn Declaration  
\*Call to Worship Confession of Sin  
\*Kyrie  
\*Assurance of Pardon  
Scripture Leviticus 19:1-18  
\*Gloria Patri  
\*Statement of Faith (Front of hymnal)  
Pastoral Prayer  
Announcements  
Hymn 406 # 406  
  
Sermon "Who is My Neighbor?"  
Text Leviticus 19:18  
Offering  
\*Doxology (Trinity Church)  
\*Offering Response (Christ Church)  
\*Prayer & Lord's Prayer  
\*Hymn # 393  
\*Benediction  
\*Threefold Amen  
Postlude

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\*Congregation Standing

The Good Samaritan

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR

Text: Leviticus 19; 11-18

A man was driving along Pa. Interstate 80 one dark night and seeing two hitchhikers he decided to stop and pick them up. Since he was alone he thought that perhaps it would help to have company. <sup>FALL THE LOVELY TIME</sup> The two men he picked up were young men in their early twenties. Several miles after they entered the car, one of them drew a gun and demanded that the man pull over to the side of the road. When the car stopped they ordered him out, and demanded his wallet and wrist watch. When they had taken everything of value that the man had, they beat him up and left him beside the road, driving off in his car. He lay on the shoulder of the road for several hours. Many cars passed him but none stopped. He was laying in such a way that the headlights of the oncoming cars could not help but make him visible. Finally an elderly man stopped to investigate, and since the nearest phone was some distance away, he decided the best thing to do was to take him to the nearest hospital. So he drove him to the hospital and had the man admitted. The man was suffering not only from the severe beating but from exposure as well. When he was admitted the man who had picked him up had to answer the routine questions that are asked at a time like this, and since the man had no identification, the admitting nurse was sceptical as to whether the hospital would be reimbursed for their services. The elderly man very graciously consented to stand all the expenses involved. Who was the foolish driver? Who was the very generous ~~man~~ and compassionate man? Where did this all happen? The answer is that this is not a true story. It is simply what would probably be considered today as a new translation of the Good Samaritan. In the Gospel of Luke Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan. A man identified as a lawyer, first asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life, and the answer was, that he should love God with all his heart and soul and mind, and his neighbor as himself. ~~Feeling~~ <sup>HE</sup> Feeling that he had been outsmarted, and wanting to justify himself <sup>HE</sup> asked and who is my neighbor? This question is asked by many people. We could all ask this and be justified in doing so. Sometimes it is not easy to recognize our neighbor. Sometimes there is doubt as to helping our neighbor. First we need to define neighbor.

I looked the word up in the dictionary and it gave several definitions. Among others it said, "One who lives near another," and the one that perhaps tells us more meaningfully than any other is the definition that states, "A fellow being subject to the obligations of humanity." Now here is what Jesus was trying to tell this fellow. The man was probably asking, (if we care to read between the lines,) "Can I love a neighbor who has broken the law and is in prison? Can I love a neighbor who is hateful and spiteful? Can I love a neighbor who shows no love in return? And can I love a neighbor regardless of who or what he is? Again, we can all ask these questions. But there is much more involved in this than the mere word love. To have love for someone means concern, it means a mutual sharing ~~of~~, it means an outreach from one to the other. And it means to have compassion. To have compassion means to be oblivious to what the person has done, or who he is. This is real love to a neighbor. ~~I am not telling you this because I am not a theologian~~ I hesitate to tell personal experiences because at times this can be rather boring. But if you will permit me I would like to share this one with you I then perhaps you will see what I am trying to say.

Several years ago when I worked in Pittsburgh on the 4to 12 shift, I was walking across the seventh street bridge in downtown Pittsburgh on my way to the North Side where I parked my car, (for free of course.) When I was half-way across I happened to see a woman standing at the rail looking down into the water.. Perhaps at anytime during the day this would not seem too surprising, but at midnight it is.. Especially around the North Side. It seemed so ~~sixxx~~ strange to me that when I got in my car I <sup>FELT A COMPELLION</sup> had to ride over the bridge to see if she was still there.. She was still standing where I had last seen her, so I went to the ~~at~~ other end of the bridge and turned around and came over the bridge again, and when I got almost to where she had been standing I <sup>HEN</sup> saw <sup>↑</sup> leap into the river. I stopped the car and ran to the rail and looked down, and she was struggling and calling for help. I ran down to River Avenue and there was a car coming. I stopped it and luck it was the owner of the cruise ship, "The Gateway Clipper." He and I went to his dock and got a rowboat, and rowed down to where the woman had been, but she was gone.. When we got back to shore the police were there and they questioned us about it.. Because of the police report the story appeared in the Pitts-



burgh papers and was even on the television news. As a result of this many people gave me their personal viewpoints on what had taken place. <sup>& WHAT THEY WOULD HAVE DONE</sup> One of these was a member of my home Church. It just so happens that he runs a radio and television repair shop facing on Fort Duquesne Boulevard. Because of this he said that he had seen many people leap from the bridges to commit suicide. And he also told me that had this same incident happened when he was crossing the bridge, he would have kept on going and let on that it never happened. This has made me do some very serious thinking since that time. Was the remark that this man made an isolated case of not caring about anyone else? Is he perhaps a rarity among men? I think not. In fact I know he isn't. The reason why I know is that several times I have said almost the same thing about someone. He got himself into that mess so let him see how he gets out of it. Does this remark sound familiar? Let him stew in his own soup for awhile. I wouldn't help him if my life depended on it. All of these remarks are made and being made about people throughout the world daily. I think if we were to ask for a show of hands this morning we would find that each of us has said or made a remark such as this at one time or another. But we are not going to try to embarrass anyone in this way. But what I am going to ask is that each of us think about the cruelty of remarks such as these. Think of the amount of hatred that is engendered through remarks of this kind. Then think of what takes place when we see a chance to help someone. We have hardened our hearts and our spirits to the point that we simply turn our backs when we could help. Think of that poor girl in New York who was stabbed repeatedly until she was murdered, and right in plain sight of many able bodied men who could have ganged up on her assailant and run him off at least. This is what comes from not caring about your neighbor. We harden ourselves little by little until we reach the point that we can actually see someone killed before our eyes and never lift a finger to help. This is what is wrong with America today. This is what is causing the lawlessness and disregard for authority in our land today. Anyone who is up to no good knows that the average citizen is not too prone to intervene in his misdeeds. So he feels free to do his deeds of dishonesty or whatever it may be and very often he gets away with it. But we as a people and we as a nation must come back to the realization that every man woman and child in this world are our

neighbors. We are responsible to them. We owe them our help and our support. This is irregardless whehter they are Christian or Jew. Whether they are White or Red or Black or Yellow. Whether they are Communist or Nationalist or of any other Political persuasion. What Jesus said about helping your neighbor had no strings attached. God's command through Moses had no strings attached. It states love your <sup>neighbor</sup> as yourself. And basically we love ourselves pretty good. Don't we? At least we always take care of good old number 1 first. And this is part of the trouble with

~~in the Bible the Good Samaritan Jesus tells the story and then Jesus asked the classic question "Which of these three proved~~  
the world today. Everyone more or less is out for himself. There is a little story that would seem to fit into this thinking. One Sunday afternoon in order to have a little rest, a man tore a picture of the map of the world from a newspaper, cut it into a number of odd shaped pieces and gave it to his daughter to take into the living room to put the world together again. He hoped for an hour of quiet, but in five minutes she was back, announcing that the world was all laid out on the floor. How did you ever do it in such a short time? asked the dumbfounded father. "Oh that was simple", she explained. "There was a picture of a man on the other side of the map. I just put the man together correctly- and then the world was all okay." Doesn't this pretty much tell us what needs to be done?

After Jesus told the story of the, "Good Samaritan," He asked the classic question, "Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbor to the man who fell into the brigands hands?" The lawyer replied, "The one who took pity on him." And then Jesus gave the command that should shake us each one to the very depths of our beings, because we do not do it, or if we do it isn't too often. He said, "Go, and do the same yourself." Let us pray.